

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 /018 W
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R 041015Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO USDOC WASHDC

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9242

AMEMBASSY RABAT

UNCLAS TUNIS 3343

COMMERCE FOR CAGNE/JENSEN

DEPT FOR NEA/AFN

RABAT FOR AGATT

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, TS

SUBJ: EXPORT OF TUNISIAN OLIVE OIL TO US

REF: TUNIS 1465; STATE 107922

1. EMBASSY TRANSMITTED INFORMATION RECEIVED STATE 107922, JENSEN-CASSE LETTER OF MAR 20, AND SCHROEDER LETTER OF MAY 5 TO JABBES, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF NATIONAL OIL OFFICE. IN REPLY JUST RECEIVED, JABBES EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR INFORMATION AND CONFIRMED THAT HE IS PROCEEDING WITH PLANS TO VISIT US FOR ABOUT 10 DAYS BEGINNING IN WASHINGTON ON JUNE 16. HE NOTED THAT HE HAD RECEIVED NO DIRECT RESPONSES FROM POTENTIAL AMERICAN IMPORTERS OF TUNISIAN OLIVE OIL AND WAS PUZZLED BY REMARKS IN INFORMATION PASSED ON BY EMBASSY RE HIGH COST OF TUNISIAN OIL AND PREFERENCE BY OLIVE OIL IMPORTERS FOR BULK PURCHASE. HE INTENDS WRITE DIRECTLY TO ALL COMPANIES AND ASSOCIATIONS WHOSE NAMES HE HAD RECEIVED TO INFORM THEM OF HIS VISIT. HE WILL ALSO ASK TUNISIAN EMBASSY WASHINGTON TO ESTABLISH CONTACTS IN COOPERATION WITH CAGNE/USDOC WITH OTHER POTENTIAL AMERICAN IMPORTERS AND CONSUMERS OF OLIVE OIL.

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2. JABBES INDICATED THAT TUNISIA STILL HAS APPROXIMATELY 20,000 TONS OF OLIVE OIL FROM 1974/75 HARVEST WHICH COULD BE SOLD TO US. HE SAYS THAT HE WILL BRING SAMPLES OF TUNISIAN OLIVE OIL WITH HIM AND WILL TRY INTEREST POTENTIAL CONSUMERS, PARTICULARLY LARGE FOOD CHAINS, IN DIRECT PURCHASE OF OLIVE OIL DURING HIS VISIT. HE WOULD APPRECIATE ALL HELP WHICH USDOC COULD GIVE HIM IN ESTABLISHING CONTACTS WITH INTERESTED FIRMS.

3. FYI. ACCORDING FORMER TUNISIAN PRIVATE OLIVE OIL EXPORTER, ONLY PART OF 1974/75 OIL PRODUCTION HAS BEEN SOLD TO DATE, POSSIBLY BECAUSE OF EXCESSIVE EXPECTATIONS REGARDING PRICE. THIS SOURCE ALSO INDICATED THAT TUNISIA ANTICIPATES HUGE INCREASE (POSSIBLY UP TO 200,000 TONS) IN OLIVE OIL PRODUCTION IN 1975/76 AND MUST DISPOSE OF ALL OIL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER ASSURE SUFFICIENT STORAGE CAPACITY. END FYI.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE IF USDOC WOULD PROVIDE ALL ASSISTANCE IN VIEW OF FACT THAT ORIGINAL REQUEST FOR HELP WAS MADE DIRECTLY BY MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE BELKHOJA TO UNDER SECRETARY COMMERCE TABOR DURING HIS VISIT HERE. SUGGEST CAGNE COORDINATE WITH TUNISIAN EMBASSY WASHINGTON, RECOGNIZING THAT SLOWNESS IN GOT COMMUNICATIONS MAY MEAN THAT EMBASSY HAS NOT YET BEEN INFORMED OF PROPOSED VISIT BY JABBES. FROM CONVERSATION WITH JABBES, WE DOUBT THAT SCHROEDER IS IN FACT SOLE SELLING AGENT OF TUNISIAN OIL IN US AS HE CLAIMS BUT BELIEVE JABBES AND VARIOUS AMERICAN IMPORTERS AND CONSUMERS CAN WORK THIS OUT DURING JABBES VISIT.
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